

Governor's 2018 Agricultural and Urban Conservation Award winners honored

Delaware Association of Conservation Districts honors State Representative David L. Wilson as Legislator of the Year

DOVER – The Delaware Agricultural Museum and Village was the setting for today's annual Governor's Agricultural and Urban Conservation Awards. Governor John Carney, along with Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control Secretary Shawn M. Garvin, Department of Agriculture Secretary Michael Scuse, Delaware Association of Conservation Districts President Edwin Alexander, and USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist Kasey Taylor, led a ceremony recognizing this year's honorees and signed a proclamation officially designating April 29-May 6 as Soil and Water Stewardship Week in Delaware under the theme, "Healthy Soils Are Full of Life."

Picture above, left to right: DNREC Sec. Shawn M. Garvin, State Conservationist Kasey Taylor, State Rep. David L. Wilson, Governor John Carney, and DACD President Edwin Alexander.

"Today's honorees have demonstrated their ongoing commitment to improving the environment, and on behalf of the people of Delaware, I would like to thank each of them for their dedication and for their time, effort, and investment to implement model conservation practices," said Governor Carney. "I also want to thank all of the Conservation District supervisors and employees for the many and various contributions they make to improve the quality of life in Delaware."

"Much of the work we do at DNREC is accomplished through

partnerships with USDA-NRCS and Delaware's three conservation districts, and these awards highlight the beneficial outcomes of these relationships," said Secretary Garvin. "This year's honorees are wonderful and diverse examples of how we can learn from the success of others and can all be better environmental stewards by taking thoughtful and important actions to protect and enhance our water and air quality."

This year's Conservation Award winners are:

New Castle County

Urban: Cheltenham Bridge –Westminster Civic Association, Hockessin

The community of Westminster has privately-maintained streets including three bridges that cross Hyde Run, a small tributary of Mill Creek. In 2013, the Westminster Civic Association (WCA) contracted with Pennoni Associates to inspect the Cheltenham Bridge and provide recommendations to the WCA. The association planned to replace the existing bridge and remove an adjacent upstream bridge, realigning an affected driveway. The WCA contacted Representative Gerald Brady to request funding assistance; Rep. Brady contacted the New Castle Conservation District seeking engineering and funding assistance for the project. NCCD contracted with Pennoni for bridge engineering and design services, permit acquisition, limited construction services, and technical assistance. Pennoni used accelerated bridge construction methods to design a prefabricated concrete arch bridge to meet the community's needs while allowing for a three-month construction period – about one-third of the construction time for a site-built bridge, minimizing community inconvenience and stream resource impacts. The contractor, Merit Construction Engineers, delivered and erected the 30-foot-long by 30-foot-wide precast concrete arch frame in just two days, saving an estimated \$200,000 in construction costs. This bridge construction

method may have applicability in other communities in New Castle County and throughout Delaware.

Kent County

Agricultural: Broad Acres, Dover

In 1943, Joseph Zimmerman started his first farming operation across from Dover Air Force Base and in 1944 moved to a Leipsic farm. On Sept. 15, 1952, Joseph signed his cooperator's agreement with the Kent County Soil Conservation District. In 1978, the farm was named Broad Acres, Inc. From those early days until the current day, the Zimmerman family has been long-time supporters of all conservation practices and excellent environmental stewards. Current owners Fred and Dan Zimmerman grow 300 acres of potatoes, 600 acres of small grains, 700 acres of corn, and 1,000 acres of soybeans on the 800 acres they own plus an additional 1,200 acres they rent. Through conservation practices, they address water quality, soil erosion, nutrient management, and water management through tile and open drainage practices. The Zimmermans also serve as managers on the South Muddy Branch Tax Ditch, and support the Delaware Envirothon through the Kent Conservation District's Barn Dance fundraiser by donating potatoes for the event's auction.

Urban: Delmarva Power and Light Company

The Delmarva Power and Light Company and their environmental consultant, McCormick Taylor, Inc., demonstrated a commitment to protecting natural areas and minimizing environmental impacts throughout the completion of a major transmission line rebuild from Cedar Creek to Milford along the entire eastern length of Kent County. The project crossed substantial areas of fresh water wetlands and tidal marsh while minimizing environmental impacts. The project utilized 776,500 square-feet of composite wetland matting, 81,000 feet of filter logs, and 48 temporary bridge crossings to minimize the impacts of

equipment and vehicles. The project also utilized aerial sky cranes to transport and install transmission poles and lines across critically sensitive areas, further minimizing impacts to those areas.

Sussex County

Agricultural: Chip Baker, H&V Farms Inc., Millsboro

As the owner of H&V Farms in Millsboro in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, Chip Baker has made a long-term commitment to improving water quality, using innovative methods of enhancing soil health, planting cover crops, and protecting the environment. Baker farms 621 acres of corn and soybeans and has a 50,000-broiler operation. His farm has been never-till for 25 years, and he plants multispecies blends of cover crops on all of his acres, with the goal of having all his ground covered all year round. Baker participates in the Conservation Stewardship Program for nutrient management, irrigation water management, conservation tillage, and pest management, as well as the District's Air Seeder Pilot Program. Because of Baker's innovation and interest in improving soil health and promoting soil health practices with his peers, he became a Delaware Soil Health Champion, joining a large national network of more than 200 soil health champions. In 2016, Baker hosted and shared his experience with about 115 people for an Air Seeder Demonstration/Soil Health Field Day at his farm. He also serves on the District's Soil Health Advisory Committee, providing guidance and direction to the District in regards to soil health outreach and education efforts.

Urban: Delaware Avenue Streambank Restoration Project, Laurel

Initiated by DNREC, the Delaware Avenue/Ellis stream restoration project in Laurel addressed damage from the June 2006 flood in western Sussex County. During this flood event,

parts of western Sussex County received between 12" and 18" of rainfall in a 24-hour period. The high storm flows caused severe bank erosion, resulting considerable loss of property. After visiting the site, DNREC's Drainage Program staff decided to apply a natural channel design or stream restoration approach, rather the traditional bank stabilization methodology. Natural channel design restores degraded streams by creating a system that mimics natural conditions, including sequences of pools and riffles, floodplains, and meanders. These features increase bank stability while helping to improve water quality and ecological diversity. This project was completed for approximately \$75,000 from the Resource, Conservation, and Development 21st Century fund and Community Transportation funds provided by Representative Timothy Dukes.

Delaware Association of Conservation Districts' Legislator of the Year

The Delaware Association of Conservation Districts (DACD) also recognized [State Representative David L. Wilson](#), 35th District, as the 2017 Legislator of the Year, an annual award given for outstanding service, loyalty and devotion to conservation efforts in Delaware. Rep. Wilson has advocated for DACD in his capacity on the House Agriculture Committee and the Bond Bill Committee. He has also been an active supporter of Sussex Conservation District activities and has participated in both Sussex and USDA cost share programs.

Delaware's Conservation Districts, one in each county, are a unique governmental unit within DNREC. Their mission is to provide technical and financial assistance to help Delawareans conserve and improve their local natural resources, including solving land, water and related resource problems; developing conservation programs to solve them; enlisting and coordinating help from public and private sources to accomplish these goals; and increasing awareness of the inter-

relationship between human activities and the natural environment. Delaware's district supervisors have a statewide organization, the Delaware Association of Conservation Districts (DACD), a voluntary, non-profit alliance that provides a forum for discussion and coordination among the Conservation Districts.

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